

# HARMONY FIRE DISTRICT

P.O. Box 360 – 194 Putnam Pike  
Harmony, R.I. 02829

The regularly scheduled monthly meeting of the Harmony Fire District Executive Board was held at the Harmony Fire Station on **Thursday, October 15, 2009.**

Present: Chief Stuart Pearson; Tax Collector - Kimberly Barber;  
Clerk - Ann Dahlquist; Attorney - Fred Mason, Jr.;  
Board Members - Louise Michaels, Milton Huston & George Kain

Absent: Moderator - Raymond Fogarty, Jr.; Treasurer - Sandra Owens;  
Board Member - James Richards

**I. – Meeting Called to Order: 7:10 pm** by substitute Moderator Milton Huston, who stood in for Raymond Fogarty during his absence.

**II. - Approval of the minutes from the September 17<sup>th</sup> meeting.**

Moderator Huston asked the board if there were any discrepancies to note on the minutes from the September 17<sup>th</sup> meeting. If not, he would like to call for a motion to accept them.

George made a motion to accept the minutes. Louise seconded the motion. The motion carried.

**III. - Treasurer's Report:**

Due to Sandy's absence there was not a treasurer's report to present.

**IV. - Tax Collector's Report:**

Taxes receivable balance is \$156,137.36 as of today's date. Taxes collected in the month of September were \$78,123.09. Third party billing monies collected in the month of September totaled \$5,888.31.

Milton asked about collections, are they comparable with percentages in prior years? George said that he had heard that collections were slow this year at other places. Kim stated that collections appear to be slowing down now, but the amounts collected thus far are comparable with previous years. Louise asked if Kim if more people were making payment plans. Kim said that she has quite a few payments plans in place for properties that were on the tax sale list last year. Additionally tax payers are working with her making partial payments on their accounts, especially a lot of elderly residents with fixed incomes.

Louise made a motion to accept the Tax Collector's report. George seconded it. The motion carried.

**V. - Chief's Report:**

First, the Chief wished the district board clerk, Ann Dahlquist, a Happy Birthday. Everyone followed with good wishes of their own to Ann, who celebrated her birthday this past Sunday.

Then the Chief presented his report. This past month there was an officer's meeting held. We continued to work on the updates for Standard Operation Procedures and Guidelines (SOP's and SOG's). A drill schedule for October thru December was also created.

On October 3<sup>rd</sup> the 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Gloucester Firefighters Scholarship Steak Fry was held at Watmough's Campground again this year. There was a nice crowd, for a rainy day. The food was good and a good time was had by all. An estimated \$9,000 was made at the event.

Out in the hall, in the curio cabinet, you will see that Kim had the Observer~Valley Breeze article the Chief appeared in, matted and framed. The Chief was very modest about his illustrious career here at the HFD.

An update on the maintenance and repairs to apparatus. Engine 23 has been fixed. Next Engine 21 will be sent out for maintenance and repairs to the American LaFrance dealer. Engine 21 is now about 5 years old.

The 50/50 Grant we applied for from the RI Department of Environmental Management, through the Federal Forestry program, has been received. Chief Goodnough and Chief Pearson have been working on this project together and the West Gloucester Fire Department has received a grant for the same purpose. We both now have new Kubota RTV's on order. Delivery should be within 2 weeks. We will now need to institute training procedures for driving the RTV. This item, being collaborated with West Gloucester for purchasing, also helps achieve one of our Strategic Plan target goals.

An update on the Gloucester fire departments training site. Progress is being made. Concrete has been poured, stone & gravel have been dropped and a third container has been delivered. Hopefully we will get the rooftop simulator built before the weather turns bad. If not it will have to wait until the spring. This simulator is the item we received the grant from the RI State Firemen's League for.

Also, one of our firefighters, Stephan Winsor, has been hired by the Central Coventry Fire District as a full-time firefighter. He intends to remain active here in Harmony and coordinate the muster team and the Annual Golf Tournament for the Harmony Fire Department and Improvement Association (Association) next year. The board offered their congratulations to Steve.

The Chief then presented the list of open grants to the board, as had been requested at the last meeting. Copies of the list were handed out to all present. The total of outstanding grants, unawarded, at this time is \$692,515.33. Milton asked about grant monies from Stimulus Funds. The Chief stated that two of the grants included in this total are for Stimulus Funds. One for \$143,650.00 for building improvements and one for \$134,689.33 for building renovation. Some discussion followed about the delay in awarding Fire Prevention and Stimulus Fund grants.

Next the Chief presented a report on the status of the new rescue. The committee met with Mark Hooper of Specialty Vehicles, Inc. The specifications were reviewed and some minor

adjustments were made. The truck is now on order and we will pay for the chassis upon receipt. Once we receive the final drawings and approve them, it will be 120 days until delivery. Mr. Hooper is confident he will meet the delivery deadline.

The Chepachet Fire District board has agreed to pay us \$6,500 for 50% ownership of the old Rescue 2. Payment will be issued after our new truck is received.

Also, the old rescue stored in West Glocester has been sold for \$1,000, as is, to John Baccari.

Louise made a motion to accept the Rescue Committee report presented by the Chief. George seconded the motion. The motion carried.

George made a motion to accept the Chief's report. Louise seconded it. The motion carried.

#### **VI. - Committee Reports:**

- a. *Rescue Committee – J. Richards, Chair* – due to Jim's absence this report was presented by the Chief during his report.

#### **VII. - Old Business:**

- a. *Call Pay Review – G. Kain* – George asked about the committee selection. He believes it should be himself, the Chief, a department officer and a representative from the Association. The Chief agreed, stating that they had been trying to work on it for quite some time now, but just can't seem to finalize it. We really need to make a change this year though. The per diem rate has changed twice and we have not changed the call pay amount yet. Budget wise, we have prepared for a change this year in our 2009-2010 budget. The overall process will take more time and we need to get something in place for this year though.

The Chief then presented a simple plan for the 2009 pay out. It will be for this year only, with a more structured plan devised by the committee for next year. A copy of the proposal was given to everyone in attendance. The call pay would be increased by rank. The incentive bonus would be continued with dollar amounts adjusted. The 20% level would be eliminated, since it is already part of department regulations that a crew member must achieve 20% to be considered an active member. A 50% level would be added to give extra recognition to our best responders. \$500 Bonus stipends would be available, at the Chief's discretion, to those crew members who devote extra time to specific jobs within the department, above and beyond what is already expected of them. The Chief will be asking for reports from these people, perhaps quarterly, to record the work they have performed and justify the stipend payments. These stipends might possibly even be split between individuals that share the duties. Some examples of stipends are: Department Photographer, In-House IT Support, Driver Trainer – VFIS certified, CPR Trainer – AHA certified and EMS Inventory Manager. There may be other categories added as deemed necessary and only certifications that are beneficial to the department would apply. One exception to this stipend program would be the Fire Prevention officer, who already receives half of the compensation that the district receives from the Harmony Hill School for

the Fire Starter Program. This is a contractual service where the district receives \$400 per session, with no fewer than 3 and no more than 6 sessions to be held per year.

There are some basic guidelines that apply to the Chief's proposal in general. One, Probationary members receive no call pay. Louise asked how long the probation is. The Chief replied 6 months. Two, Privates must complete either Firefighter I or become an EMT Basic within their first year of joining. The Chief clarified that there is some flexibility though with this rule, due to the availability of classes. Louise stated that she had thought a crew member had to possess both firefighting and EMS skills. The Chief replied, no, volunteers can provide either or both service. Some discussion followed about the Chief's proposal and the structure of the program in the future.

George Nichols, crew member and President of the Association, asked if specific skill levels would give extra pay to the individual ranks. For example, a Private with an EMT Cardiac license, would they get more than the \$15 base? The Chief said that the plan he has presented for this year will not pay more, but the more structured plan for the future is looking into that. George N. said that having that little extra might encourage more people to respond to calls. Even though they might not always get to ride on the truck, they will be here to stand-by the station. Crew members should not get extra just for riding the trucks, it should be based on their response only. The Chief agreed 100% with him and Louise said that is right in line with our Strategic Plan, getting more people to respond. The Chief stated that he would love to have to deal with the problem of having too many people respond, he'd love it! Some discussion followed about the responsibilities of rank, skill level and compensation. The board thanked George N. for his input.

So, the Chief clarified, we will go with the 2009 Call Pay Proposal for this year's pay out in December. Then we will have from now, October, until May 2010 for the Call Pay committee to finalize the more structured plan. That way we will have a dollar amount to vote on for the 2010-2011 budget at the annual meeting.

Louise made a motion to accept the 2009 Call Pay Proposal. George seconded it. The motion carried.

- b. *Charter & By-Laws Review* – the Chief stated that we will be reviewing specific sections, for example the tax exemption section that was researched earlier this year, to make sure they are up-to-date.
- c. *Policies & Procedures Manual* – no new information.

#### **VIII. - New Business:**

Milton asked the Chief about rescues being posted at school athletic events. There were a couple of bad injuries recently, one boy lacerated his kidney and another broke his ankle. The response took quite a while and he was just wondering what the policy is. The Chief said that he believes there is an Interscholastic League rule that states as long as there is a medical professional on-

site, there does not have to be a detail posted. Milton stated that there was a doctor there and he always is, thankfully. Ann said that she thought it took the rescue longer because of the way the driveway is configured. There is only one way in and she isn't sure that everyone is aware of that. Some discussion followed about fire and police details and the responsibilities of both Gloucester and Foster for the Ponaganset school athletic events. These types of issues would need to be addressed ultimately by the school department.

George Nichols was present as a representative from the Association. He reported that the Association has allocated \$700 to purchase new pots, pans and utensils for the new kitchen. These items should be delivered by the end of November, at the very latest.

The Association is asking the District board's permission to use the stations internet connection. They are obtaining one or more computers for the member's personal use. After some discussion amongst the board members, it was decided that more research is needed to be done by the Association. They need to look into the web servers capacity, security issues, internet restrictions, etc. They will need to come back to the board with more information at the next meeting.

The Chief also wanted to mention at this time that Matt Floor has provided many hours to the department, providing IT service, and has not sent us any bills for it. He would like to consider him when preparing our stipends.

George N. also reported that the Association's candy machine, located in the hall near the secretary's office will be replaced soon. It has been out of service for well over a year now.

**IX. - Public Input:** No audience.

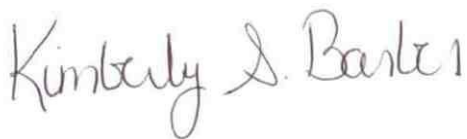
**X. – Executive Session:** None called.

**XI. – Adjournment:**

George made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Louise seconded it. The motion carried. The October meeting of the Harmony Fire District Executive Board was adjourned at **8:20 pm**.

The next meeting of the Harmony Fire District Executive Board is scheduled for Thursday, 7:00 pm, **November 19, 2009** at the Harmony Fire Department.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kimberly S. Barber".

Kimberly S. Barber  
Tax Collector/Secretary